



News Release

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California Releases Nation's First Statewide Park Access Tool *GIS Tool Identifies Communities in Need of Parks*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. –California State Parks has released the nation's first statewide GIS system of demographic information that can identify areas where parks are needed. The new "[Park Access Tool](#)" can produce demographic reports about every city, county, senate and assembly district, or neighborhood area in California.

"It is important for Californians to not only have access to state parks, but to also have immediate daily access to parks within their own communities," said California State Parks Director Lisa Mangat. "The "[Park Access Tool](#)" provides demographic information that can help spark grassroots, community-based efforts to improve the health and quality of life locally through the establishment of new parks."

The new system also features a new GIS tool that locates more than \$2.3 billion of grant-funded park projects provided through the California State Park's Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS), representing some of the nation's largest park-related grant programs. Projects such as the City of Richmond's [Pogo Park](#) provide places for children to play, bring out the talents of neighborhood residents, and create a sense of pride in communities.

"We drilled capital monies down, into the community, to hire and train local residents to design and build the park themselves," said Toody Maher, Executive Director of Pogo Park. "Our motto is to lift up the people at the same time you lift up the place. And it worked. This public project was a magnet that brought out all the goodness and talents of the neighborhood that are so often hidden."

According to a [2012 public survey](#) by California State Parks, 72 percent of Californians walk to parks they most frequently use. The survey also reported that 88 percent of



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teenagers responded that parks help them deal positively with stress and 80 percent of Californians said recreation programs improve health.

The [Park Access Tool](#) and the survey are part of California's new Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) which presents a concise, provocative and informative statement of the state's strategy to address the needs of communities that have inadequate access to public open space park lands. SCORP enables park planners and decision makers to assess outdoor recreation needs. But most importantly, the plan also enables communities and citizens to assess their own needs, plan together to meet those needs in ways that are particularly suited to their own communities, and protect the valuable public outdoor recreation estate for present and future generations.

Projects are funded through [Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants](#) (LWCF) provided by the National Park Service (NPS) and administered by OGALS. NPS requires California, and all other states, to develop a SCORP once every five years to qualify for the federal grants. SCORP therefore includes an action plan for how LWCF grant projects can meet the park and recreation needs of Californians.

"We are particularly enthused about California's focus on a useable plan that emphasized community-based planning, establishing and renovating parks in underserved areas, protecting the public recreation estate for the benefit of present and future generations, and the new online tools provided to facilitate them," said NPS LWCF Program Manager David Siegenthaler. "We hope that this approach will engender a new era of community empowerment."

Park planners, decision-makers and members of the community are encouraged to visit www.parks.ca.gov/SCORP and explore these new GIS system tools.

California State Parks is undergoing an exciting two-year Transformation Period. This transformation will retain the grandeur, beauty and history of state parks, and improve the department's ability to develop excellent management systems, maintain high quality operations, create meaningful connections to California's diverse population, and protect the state's natural and cultural resources. The transformation process will also help strengthen the relationships between California State Parks and partner organizations to ensure that parks continues to be one of California's finest assets for future generations. SCORP is one example of an initiative that will lead to positive change to meet the needs of Californians.

Please visit www.parks.ca.gov for more information on the Transformation process.

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About California's Drought

California has been dealing with the effects of drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.Gov.

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water at home, at work and even when recreating outdoors. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com

California State Parks Mission

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.

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